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# Dealing with Negativity in the Workplace



UNITED  
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

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# Seminar Goals

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- Identify how negativity surfaces in the workplace.
- Recognize how change can increase feelings of negativity.
- Develop strategies for helping yourself and others stay on track.

# Defining Negativity

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- Anger
- Complaining
- Resentment
- Passive-aggressive behavior
- Resistance
- Interpersonal conflict



# How Does Negativity Surface in the Workplace?

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Obvious ways:

- ☹ Unfriendliness
- ☹ Gripe Sessions
- ☹ Complaining
- ☹ Defensiveness
- ☹ Lack of humor
- ☹ Procrastination

# How Does Negativity Surface in the Workplace?

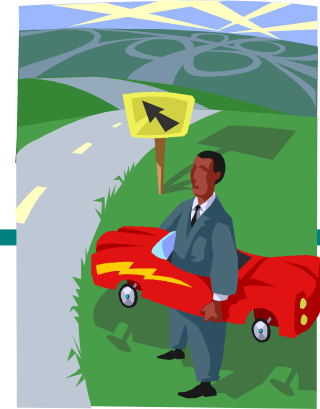


Subtle ways:

- ☹ Absenteeism
- ☹ Decreased productivity
- ☹ Lack of participation
- ☹ Lack of cooperation
- ☹ Turnover

# Conditions that May Increase Negativity

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- Change
- Unrealistic work expectations
- Unclear objectives
- Inadequate tools and training
- Lack of control
- Lack of feedback
- Inadequate incentives
- Physical discomfort
- Lack of recognition

# Change and Its Impact

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*Change can create negative feelings.*

- Initial feelings of fear and loss
  - may feel paralyzed
- Feelings of resentment and doubt
  - skeptical thoughts
  - resistant behavior
- Feelings of discomfort and anxiety
  - confused thoughts
  - unproductive behavior

# Universal Truths

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*We can't change anyone else. We can learn to respond differently to others.*

*We may not have control over the change, but we do have some control over how we respond.*



# Strategies for Overcoming Your Own Negativity

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- Question your fears
  - What is real, what is not real?
- Feeling overwhelmed?
  - Prioritize your tasks
  - Finish one task, move on to the next.
  - Completing a task will help you feel more motivated to move on.



# Strategies for Overcoming Your Own Negativity *(cont'd)*

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- Talk to a friend.
  - Talking with a friend can help you move through the change and begin to problem solve.
  - Or, call your EAP for confidential counseling.

# Strategies for Overcoming Your Own Negativity *(cont'd)*

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- Challenge “twisted” thinking:
  - Black and white thinking
  - Minimizing
  - Blowing events out of proportion
  - Catastrophic thoughts

# Strategies for Overcoming Your Own Negativity *(cont'd)*

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- Remain positive. *“When life gives you lemons, make lemonade.”*
  - Change can be an opportunity to learn new skills.
  - You can demonstrate that you can handle change – a sought after skill.
  - You can gain the confidence that you have survived and thrived.

# Strategies for Overcoming Your Own Negativity *(cont'd)*

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- Remain relaxed.



***When the wind begins to blow,  
it is better to bend as the willow  
than be stiff as the oak.***

# Helping Others

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- You are in a position to help others:
  - Be a trusted friend with whom someone can talk in confidence.
  - Try to remain positive; it's contagious.
  - Forgive; know that others may say and do things they would not normally do. You may too!